

or 23 percent of the world total—are Colombian. This according to the U.N. brings Colombia to the undesirable first position of the greatest number of IDPs in the world. Yet the Colombian government reports only 1,877,328 IDPs for the period from January of 1995–June of 2005.

Due to the lack of sufficient political will on the part of the government to attend to the IDP population, the Colombian Constitutional Court has delivered two rulings with the purpose of protecting the rights of the internally displaced: Ruling C-370 of 2005, relating to Law 975 of 2005, through which the Constitutional Court defines the scope of the rights and guarantees due to victims of the internal armed conflict under the system of transitional justice.

The Constitutional Court also issued Decree 218 of 2006, following Ruling T-025 of 2004 which declared the state of things to be unconstitutional in Colombia and ordered the government to develop a public policy designed to guarantee the effective protection of the rights of the internally displaced.

This decree examines the completion of the orders established through decrees No. 176, 177 and 178 of 2005; its principal conclusion is that the situation of unconstitutionality has yet to be overcome, while the necessary measures are not being taken to do so.

Finally, the Civil Commission for the Evaluation of Completion of Ruling T-025 and the Public Policy of Forced Displacement was formed as a plural and diverse coalition of civil society dedicated to overcoming displacement, at the same time that new protests and proposals for strengthening organizations of the internally displaced are being formed by the affected population.

Decree 218 illustrates the structural problems with the lack of a public policy for forced displacement and opens the possibility for greater public debate to examine the report presented by the government on September 13, 2006, such as the use of rights-based progress indicators.

We would also like to applaud the 42 cosponsors of H. Res. 426 and in particular our Afrodescendant brother Donald Payne and humanitarian James McGovern for raising the visibility of the plight of the many internally displaced Afro-Colombians to the U.S. Congress. In the last decade, especially during the last 5 years, internal displacement has intensified in areas of the Pacific Coast, in the departments of Nariño, Valle del Cauca, Cauca and Chocó in the collectively titled lands of Afro-Colombians. The particular characteristics of these displacements show them to be planned and deliberate, in order to cause communities to vacate their territories. This is corroborated by the study carried out by AFRODES and Global Rights in 2005, which illustrates that 61.73 percent of those people with collective titles to land in 50 municipalities with Afro-Colombian populations have been displaced from their territories. Most alarming is that there currently exists no public policy for attention to Afro-Colombian displaced populations, while the humanitarian crisis in their territories continues to worsen.

Finally, as an organization of internally displaced persons and in the name of many more who have lost their territories in Colombia, we appreciate and commend the efforts undertaken by the U.S. Congress and the international community to raise visibility of this humanitarian tragedy, specifically through H. Res. 426 in the U.S. House of Representatives. By working in partnership with the United States, the United Nations and many religious and non-governmental organizations, our communities can once again live with dignity and respect for their rights.

TRIBUTE TO FATHER FRANCIS HUND

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 18, 2007

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Father Francis Hund, who celebrates his 25th anniversary in the priesthood this Sunday, July 22nd.

Born July 31, 1956 in Paxico, KS, he was the oldest of Wilfred and Margaret Hund's eight children. He graduated from Paxico High School in 1974 and received a bachelor's degree from Benedictine College in Atchison, KS, in 1978, where he majored in music with a focus on organ. Although he had considered a vocation to the priesthood, he hadn't shared his thoughts with his parents; they thought he would be a music teacher until they read his career choice printed in his senior organ recital program!

He was selected to do his seminary studies in Rome at the North American College and was ordained to the priesthood at his home parish in Paxico in 1982. He served as associate pastor at four Shawnee Mission, KS, parishes: Queen of the Holy Rosary, Cure of Ars, St. Joseph; and Holy Trinity, before entering a graduate program in liturgical studies at St. John's University in Collegeville, MN. Returning in 1990 he served three rural parishes at Burlington, Waverly and Westphalia, KS, and was campus minister at Washburn in Topeka.

In 1992, Fr. Francis was appointed pastor of St. Theresa's in Perry, KS, and also St. Aloysius in Meriden, KS in 1993. In addition to pastoring those two parishes, he was appointed Director of the Archdiocesan Office of Liturgy and Worship, a position he held for 9 years prior to his appointment as pastor to Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Shawnee, KS, in 2001. He currently serves this parish of 1,700 families as well as being chairman of the Johnson County Regional Priests and a member of the archdiocesan Priests Personnel Board.

His family currently includes his mother, 2 brothers, 5 sisters, in-laws and 24 nieces and nephews. Madam Speaker, I know that all Members of the House of Representatives join with me in paying tribute to this dedicated servant of God upon the 25th anniversary of his entering the priesthood.

FREE THE ISRAELI SOLDIERS

SPEECH OF

HON. ROBERT WEXLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 12, 2007

Mr. WEXLER. Madam Speaker, I rise in recognition of the 1-year anniversary of the kidnapping of Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser, two soldiers in the Israeli Defense Force who were kidnapped by Hezbollah operatives on the border with Lebanon on July 12, 2006. Their kidnapping came only a few weeks after the abduction of Gilad Shalit, an IDF officer seized by Hamas militants on June 25, 2006, during a horrific attack near Kibbutz Kerem Shalom, on the border of the Gaza Strip.

These three brave young men are among eight Israeli soldiers kidnapped or missing in action over the last 25 years. Staff Sergeants Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, and Yehuda Katz have been missing since June 11, 1982, after a battle at Sultan Yakoub in Lebanon. Major Ron Arad was captured on October 16, 1986, when his aircraft was shot down inside Lebanon. Israeli soldier Guy Hever disappeared on August 17, 1997, from an army base in the southern Golan Heights.

Since my first day in the United States Congress, I have made advocating for the safe return of all Israeli soldiers a priority. During an official trip to Israel last July, I met with Benny Regev, brother of Eldad Regev, to express my deepest sympathy and concern and assure him of America's commitment to securing his brother's release. Today, I urge my colleagues to join me in renewing our commitment to secure the release of all Israeli prisoners of war and to hold those individuals, organizations, and governments involved in these abductions accountable for their violation of international law. In marking the anniversary of the kidnapping of these brave soldiers, we should also acknowledge the sacrifice of their families and of the Israeli people as they continue to defend their borders in the ongoing struggle for regional stability and peace.

As Israel's strongest ally and friend, the United States must continue to support Israel's right to self defense, and advocate for the safe return of all of Israeli soldiers missing in action and being held as prisoners of war.

TRIBUTE TO PASTOR WANDA McNEILL

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 18, 2007

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I recognize Pastor Wanda McNeill for her 17 years of tireless work as Executive Director of Washington, DC's Southeast Ministry, which she helped create in 1990. Pastor McNeill, on the surface, was not an obvious candidate to take on such work in an inner city neighborhood, having been born and raised in Sioux City, Iowa. But Pastor McNeill has touched the lives of thousands in Washington, DC, and this city will be forever grateful for her dedication to those in need. We wish her well and Godspeed as she leaves our Nation's Capital to accept a call to lead a parish in Lake Preston, South Dakota.

Whereas Pastor Wanda McNeill is a spiritual leader who, through her faith in God, has answered His call by dedicating her life's work to serving those in need;

Whereas Pastor Wanda McNeill was born on February 21, 1944 in Sioux City, Iowa, and was raised on a family farm along with her sister Stella by William and Louise Edwards;

Whereas Pastor Wanda McNeill in her earlier life was a foster parent with her late husband Frank McNeill to 12 children;

Whereas Pastor Wanda McNeill earned a Diploma in Nursing at Iowa Lutheran Hospital, Des Moines, Iowa in 1965 and has been a licensed Registered Nurse in Iowa, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Washington, DC;

Whereas Pastor Wanda McNeill served the citizens of North Carolina as a Vista Volunteer